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Cover photograph by Tom Dunham

Editor's Introduction 2

Resurrection Insights 4

Receiving Strength Through Prayer, *by John Marks Templeton* 5

"A Transforming Experience": Recovery, *by Ruth Darnay* 10

New Poetry, *by Mary Alice Reid* 12

Easter Meditations, *by John Loftus, S.J.* 18

Spirituality and Everyday Life: Deciding to Trust, *by June Verbillion* 22

Born Again at Easter Time, *by Blanche Faber-LeVere* 24

Prayers to Share 26

From Easter to Eternity, *by Doris Appleton Ralph* 29

The Gardener, *by Karl Kopp* 35

Poems, *by Lisa Boscane* 36

An Antidote to Negative States of Mind, *by Yvonne Rand* 37

Hallelujah! *by Elizabeth Anne Socolow* 38

News From Fellowship In Prayer 41

Resurrection Faith

Mohandas Gandhi used to tell the story of a blind man who loved to sit out in a sunny Indian square reciting the *Ramayana*, a North Indian religious epic. When the blind man prayed and chanted the lovely couplets, a crowd of poor Indians in their white *saris* and *dhotis* would surround him, entranced. Soon he was explaining the sacred text to a great throng, "losing himself in the discourse and carrying his listeners along with him." "It is a fact," Gandhi wrote, that in the course of this prayerful self-forgetting work he was healed of an incurable affliction: he completely recovered his sight.

The West like the East tells endless stories of recovery and renewal, of regeneration and revivification. The dream of infinite love is reborn after Calvary at an empty tomb. Jonah rises alive from the belly of a whale. St. Teresa's homely little silkmoth comes out of its cocoon as a beautiful white butterfly. The roots of such stories are sunk in religious soil, the only ground capable of bringing life out of death and restoration out of loss. To discover the deep meaning concealed in these miracle tales is to acquire resurrection faith.

Resurrection faith is more than a vision of reality or a relationship with God or reliance on divine energy. I understand by resurrection faith (1) an attitude (2) of trust (3) in God's redemptive activity that (4) leads to "working God's work with God." It is the courageous faith of those who live out their destiny as wholeheartedly and authentically as Jesus lived out his, committed to things outside themselves, to bringing the cosmos to completion in the light of dawn where brightness and shadows intermix and there is no guarantee of midday sun. Who imitates Christ in this way gives up his mindless demand for perpetual pleasure, her illusory wish for instantaneous sweetness or success, to serve God's purposes. Resurrection spirituality, an abiding interior life based in the deep conviction that "all things work together for good," is itself the evidence that darkness and prison and loneliness belong to the Kingdom of God, in spite of the suffering they may entail.

The Spirit of Resurrection brings the only hope there is when overpowering winds push striving people down and back. A 12-year-old boy contracts Aids. A young man's dreams fade away in a shelter for the

homeless. A bishop refuses to say mass until a little girl is removed from the altar and a boy is brought to serve mass in her place. How could these death-events be bearable without faith in the God Who "makes all things new"? How could despair and humiliation be endured if the risen Christ were not with us mending the tattered fabric of creation and assuring our own resurrection? As St. Paul wrote, "neither death nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, not things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord."

The articles in this edition of *Fellowship In Prayer* celebrate resurrection faith, not only as a Christian attitude but as the universal perspective of the preacher Gandhi described whose daily prayer and faith in God made him free.

Mary Ford-Grabowsky
Editor

I tell you a mystery, we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed. For this perishable nature must put on the imperishable, and this mortal nature must put on immortality . . . then shall come to pass what is written: . . ."Death is swallowed up in victory". O, death, where is thy victory? O, death where is thy sting?

I Co. 15.51-55

Though our outer nature is wasting away, our inner nature is being renewed every day.

2 Co. 4.16

How can we ever be the sold-short or cheated, we who for every service have long ago been overpaid?

Meister Eckhart

I have learned, in whatever state I am, to be content. I know how to be abased, and I know how to abound; in any and all circumstances I have learned the secret of facing plenty and hunger, abundance, and want. I can do all things in God Who strengthens me.

Phil. 4.11-13

What we think we can become.

John Walchars, S.J.

Kindness in words creates confidence; kindness in thinking creates depth; kindness in giving creates love.

Taoist Saying

Then thought I to understand this,
But it was too hard for me,
Until I went into the sanctuary of God.

Ps. 73: 16-17

Receiving Strength Through Prayer

JOHN MARKS TEMPLETON

When asked the secret of his success John Templeton gives prayer the top priority. Giving thanks to God, he feels, provides believers with strength that can raise them to new heights of performance and insight.

Templeton's approach to prayer relates to this concept of God and God's creative process. God is infinite. Everything that exists in the universe and beyond the universe is God. That means that the visible universe is only a small particle of God and is itself a manifestation of God. By the word "manifest," Templeton means that which a human being can know. Thus one little particle of God has become known to us through gravity, light waves, pulsars, and other things that enable us to perceive a few features of the universe.

Templeton believes that we ourselves are one of God's more recent creations, and, again, we represent only the tiniest fraction of God. If we realize this truth and try to bring ourselves into oneness with God, if we become humble tools in God's hands and clear channels for God's purposes, we will be able to accomplish much more than if we fail to realize that oneness. And what we do accomplish will be more likely to endure. No matter what you do in life—enrolling in college, getting married, buying stock, doing a tax return, extracting a tooth—you will do it better if you start with prayer. And God will use you as a conduit for his love and wisdom. Your prayer should say that the words you speak and the actions you take will be in harmony with God's purposes, for the benefit of God's children, and never meant only for selfish goals.

If this is your prayer, everything that follows is bound to be more successful and your life will radiate joy. With a mind no longer in conflict, you are far less likely to disagree with your associates or do something you'll later regret, on cool reflection. So your decision making will be improved if you try to bring yourself into contact with God and into a oneness with God's purposes. By making a profound effort to be one with God and God's children through prayer, everything you do in life

From The Templeton Plan: 21 Steps to Personal Success and Real Happiness, *as described by John Marks Templeton to James Ellison.* *Copyright (c) 1987 by Kindness, N. V. Reprinted by Harper and Row, Publishers, Inc.*

will turn out far better, including your business decisions. Success will seek you out.

Templeton's personal technique for getting into harmony with God—whether he is concerned with his children or his business or his many charities—is to pray simply, "Thy will be done." This approach helps him to empty his mind of all preconceptions so that he can give himself over more completely to what he perceives as God's guidance.

He prays often during the day. And if there is an especially complex problem to solve, or decision to make, he'll try to wait a day and spend extra time in prayer before he acts.

Before going to sleep that night, he says, "God, I have done the best I can. Now guide me in this decision." Very often the next morning he has a solution that is better than anything he had considered the day before. Putting yourself in God's hands through prayer and then working as hard and honestly as you can is the mark of a successful person.

Templeton also encourages his associates to participate in prayer, even when they are somewhat reluctant to get involved. In public meetings,

Tom Dunham

he has found that it is more effective to give people very little advance warning; sometimes, an hour before a meeting is to start, he'll say casually to an associate, "I'm going to ask you to open with a prayer." That gives the person a little time to prepare, though not so much that he or she becomes overly nervous or self-conscious.

Templeton feels that it is a good policy to rotate prayer at regular meetings among a number of people, because then the practice is less likely to harden into a ritual. The person praying benefits, and those listening benefit as their friends pray. The ceremony takes on a family, intimate quality, and Templeton's principle of success through prayer is spread among many.

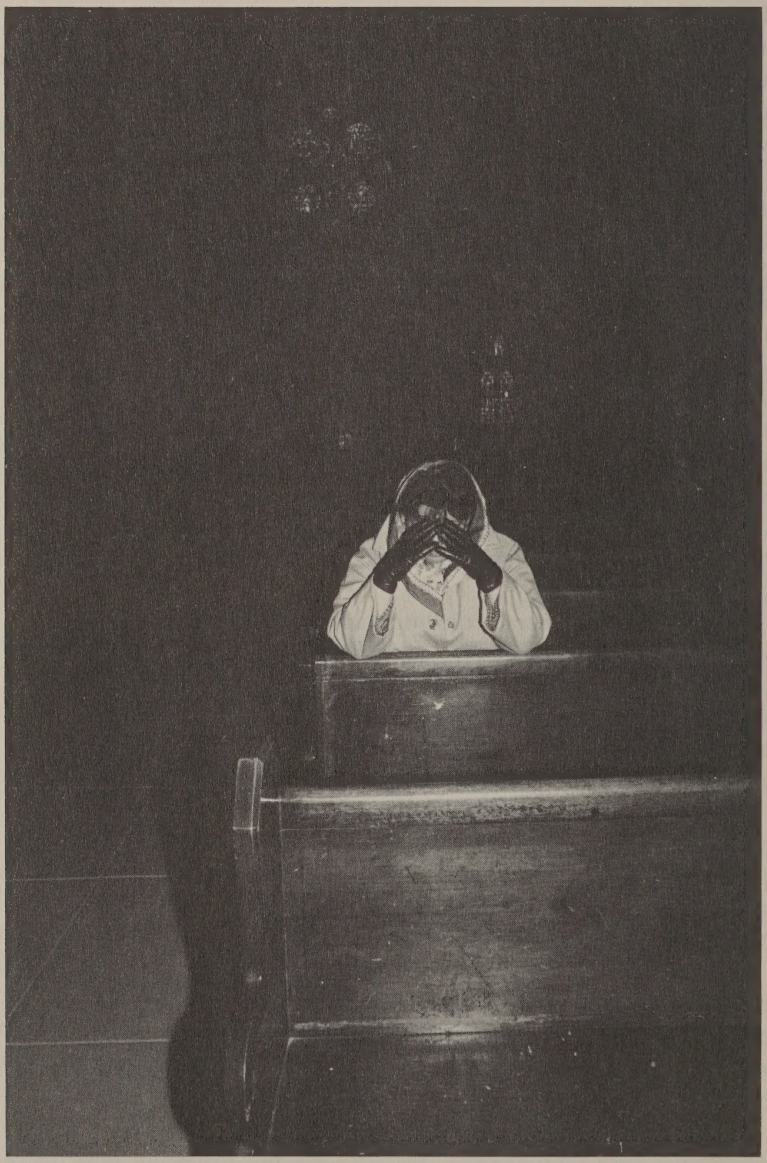
A marked emphasis on prayer was not a part of Templeton's early investment years. His career as an investment counselor can be divided into two equal parts. For the first twenty years ("when I was a worse back slider than at any other time in my life," he says), there was no prayer at investment meetings. But, for the past twenty years, all meetings have opened and closed with prayer. And it's a fact that his stress on prayer has coincided with the most successful performance period of the Templeton Growth Fund.

Skeptics may downgrade the importance of prayer in Templeton's investment selections. They may say that he was successful even before he began to pray regularly or inject prayer so openly into his business sessions. And they may further argue that he would have reached the same high level of success as an investor even if he had neglected prayer altogether.

Templeton disagrees. Prayer has given him, he's convinced, a clarity of mind and depth of insight that have been key factors in his success. Through the power of prayer, he sees much more deeply into himself and into others. He is certain that without prayer he would never have become the outstanding success that he is.

He says: "Everyone who hopes to be a successful person should start each day with a prayer. Like Solomon, do not offer self-centered prayers, but pray for wisdom and understanding. Try to end each prayer with the words, 'Thy will be done, O Lord, not mine.' The Lord's purposes are much wiser than our purposes.

"Pray that you are overwhelmingly grateful for your blessings. If you are healthy, thank the Lord for that. If your children are healthy, thank the Lord for that. Thank him for the things you have instead of asking for what you don't have.



Tom Dunham

"Begin each day by thinking of five blessings, or ten blessings. If you make a practice of doing that, your whole day will go more usefully, and constructively.

"You will be far along the road to success."

One of Templeton's favorite prayers is from Romans (12:9-18). He feels that there exists nowhere in the Bible a better prescription for success and happiness: "Let love be genuine; hate what is evil, hold fast to what is good; love one another with brotherly affection; outdo one another in showing honor. Never flag in zeal, be aglow with the Spirit, serve the Lord. Rejoice in your hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer. Contribute to the needs of the saints, practice hospitality.

"Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them. Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep. Live in harmony with one another; do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly; never be conceited. Repay no one evil for evil, but take thought for what is noble in the sight of all. If possible, so far as it depends upon you, live peaceably with all."

Step 17 teaches us that God is infinite and that just as the visible universe is only a small particle of God, we are only an infinitesimal part of the visible universe. No matter what we accomplish, we have done it under God. If we are humble, if we can bring ourselves to realize that we are one of God's more recent creations, perhaps not even his most important one, we stand a better chance to be balanced people who will lead happy and successful lives.

Try these exercises to enhance strength of your prayer: (1) Pray frequently, (2) Pray that God will use you as a channel for his love and wisdom, (3) Pray that you will be in harmony with God's purposes, (4) Pray that what you say and do will be for the benefit of everyone, (5) Put yourself in God's hands, (6) Be overwhelmingly grateful for all your blessings, (7) Pray simply, "Thy will be done."

Recovery

RUTH DARNAY

Through the power of the God Whose "perfect love casts out all fear," this young author recovered from a fatal illness. She writes that healing came to her in a hospital room when she experienced God as "The Living Light" and knew that prayers for her had been answered.

I woke from surgery to a look of worry. The doctor had said before I went under to lighten up—cysts are nothing. Easy. A snap. Now his eyes grew dark. Cancer is a dark word, I thought, and this spotless room is dark, and I'm disappearing now, goodbye, let me sleep, please take your worried face and leave. He left.

The phone rang. My mother was crying. She knew something I didn't. Dad can't talk now; he must be busy, always busy, the pressure, the bills, the hungry mouths to feed. I'm dreaming, Mother, I'm not hungry and I'm forgetting to ask you what you know. Yes, I have insurance, I told you last week, don't you remember? It's time to go, goodbye, this is a dream and you're calling long distance, our three minutes are up.

Through two steel doors the good professor glided in. I have bad manners today, you'd better go. I'd rather stay, pray with me. *Why*. Because it's time, don't you think. I couldn't think so I wailed like a baby someone dropped.

Teach me to walk, God, my knees are buckling, I'm kneeling. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, my womb in a jar on the shelf. How dare you, God, my hair's falling out on doctor's orders to die as we forgive those who trespass against us. Deliver us from a man's world, for thine is the power.

In a world called Sloan Kettering, hard drugs are legal. You can shoot up platinum all day and if your head explodes, cool out on morphine. If you get addicted, chant: thine is the power over death.

Hail Mary full of grace, radiation burns and my vision doubles and teeth loosen so I choke on lunch. The priest says you're angry, which means you must be mad the way women are. Forgive me, he says. Pray for us sinners.

Ruth Darnay is a writer living in New Jersey. A committed Episcopalian, she prefers to speak of God and the power of prayer than about herself.

Tom Dunham

What is prayer. Free will. A matter of life and death. Choose life, I read the night the word courage appeared written on my palms in a dream.

Then came a miracle that threw me to the floor. Then came light more radiant than a star bursting, streaming white through my heart, brain, bones, lungs, liver and blood; all we call the body. I am light, I am the body, I see organs healing, I am healed, it is done, it is truth. Remember this, I cried on the floor, when darkness drops.

What is darkness. Doubt seeking honor. Fear in the form of knowledge as power. Darkness is a lie that the fittest survive.

There may be one reading now thinking death approaches too fast and too soon. I am writing you. Each person is born able to create and choose life. If you will to live, realize God's will is yours, for you can never die. Talk to God. Breathe God. *Pray daily* and as you pray, see prayer answered. See and give thanks for the unspeakable gift of life. Does God teach doubt? Honor the God of faith. Believe and live.

MARY ALICE REID

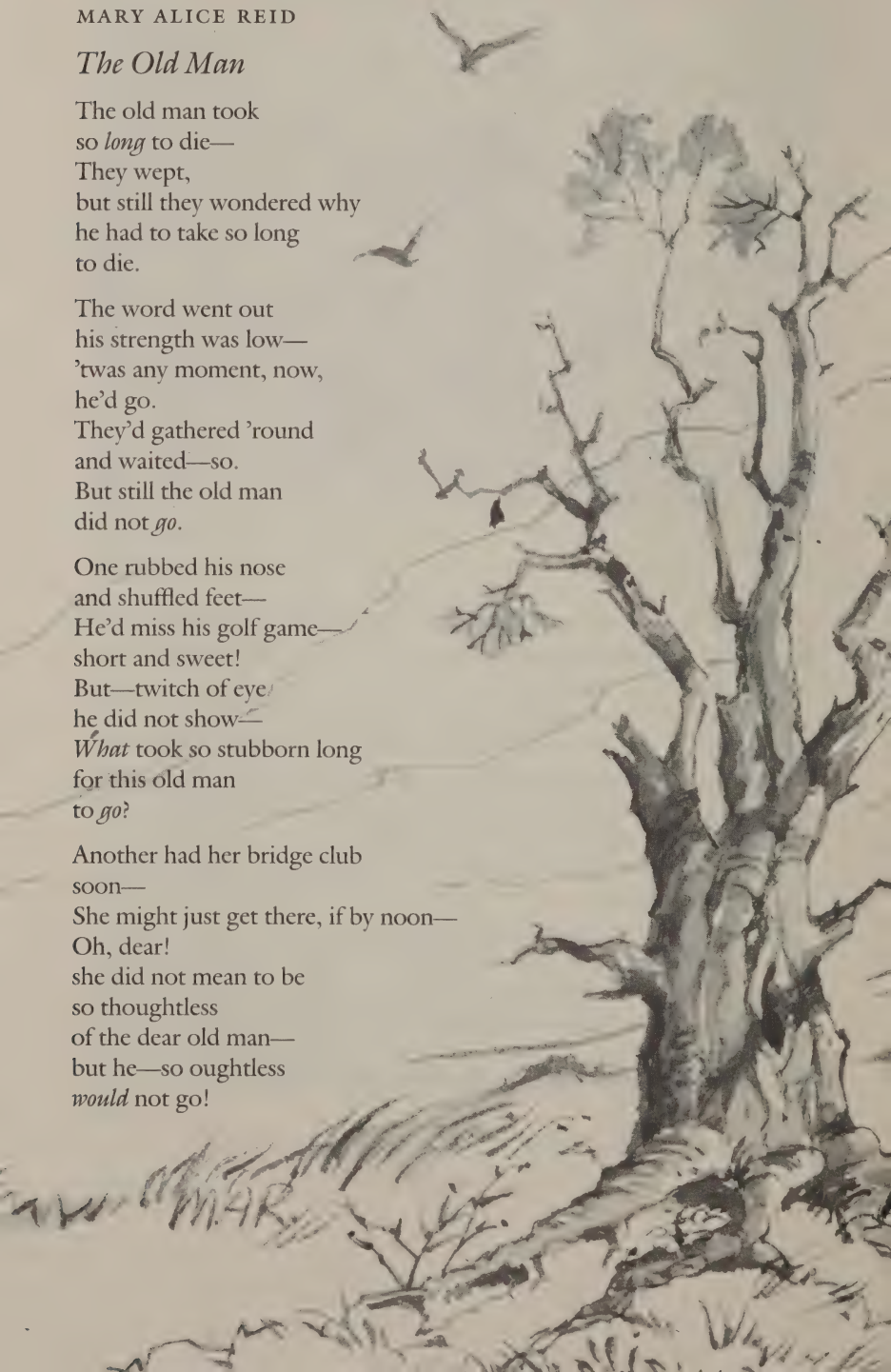
The Old Man

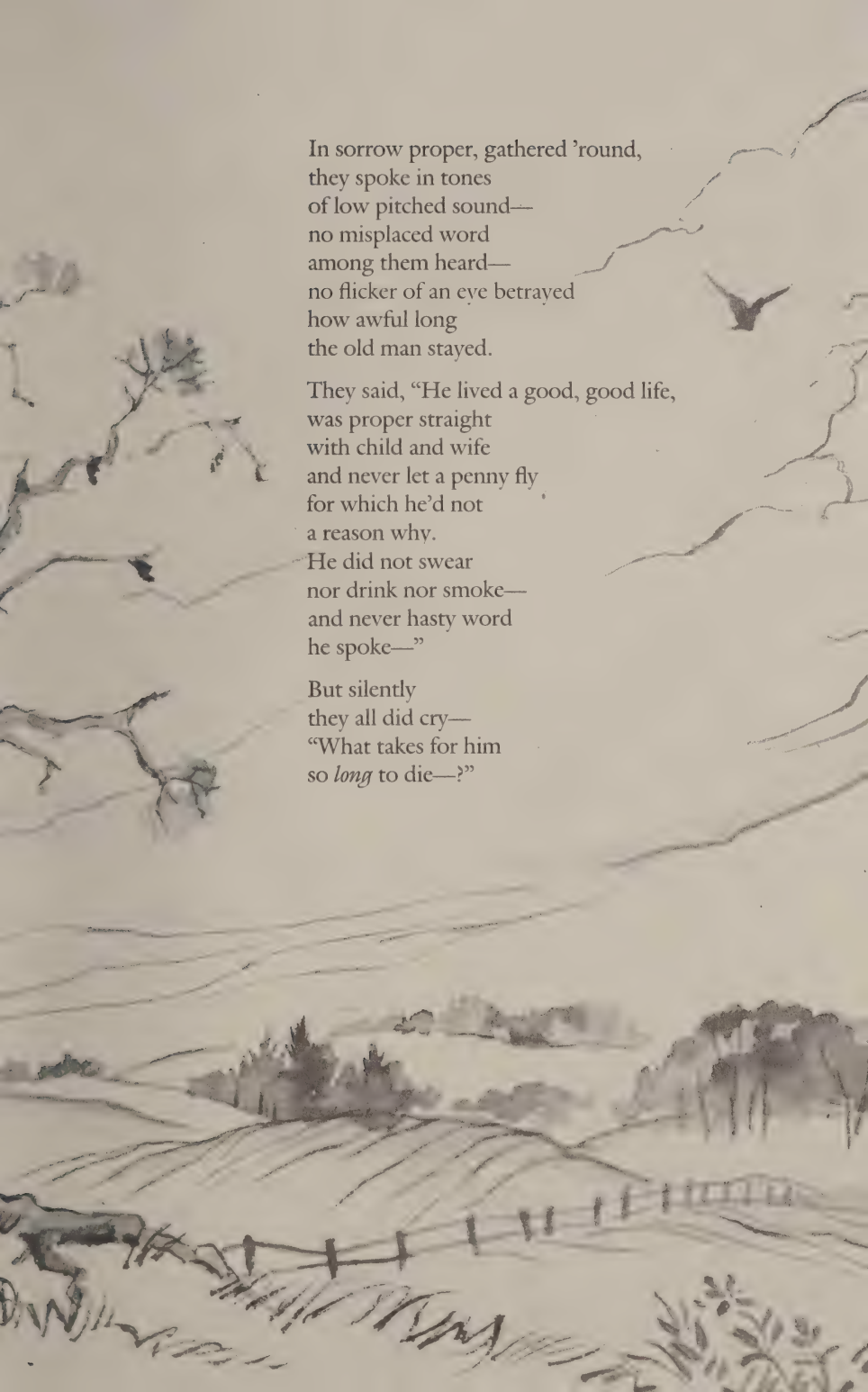
The old man took
so *long* to die—
They wept,
but still they wondered why
he had to take so long
to die.

The word went out
his strength was low—
'twas any moment, now,
he'd go.
They'd gathered 'round
and waited—so.
But still the old man
did not *go*.

One rubbed his nose
and shuffled feet—
He'd miss his golf game—
short and sweet!
But—twitch of eye
he did not show—
What took so stubborn long
for this old man
to *go*?

Another had her bridge club
soon—
She might just get there, if by noon—
Oh, dear!
she did not mean to be
so thoughtless
of the dear old man—
but he—so oughtless
would not go!





In sorrow proper, gathered 'round,
they spoke in tones
of low pitched sound—
no misplaced word
among them heard—
no flicker of an eye betrayed
how awful long
the old man stayed.

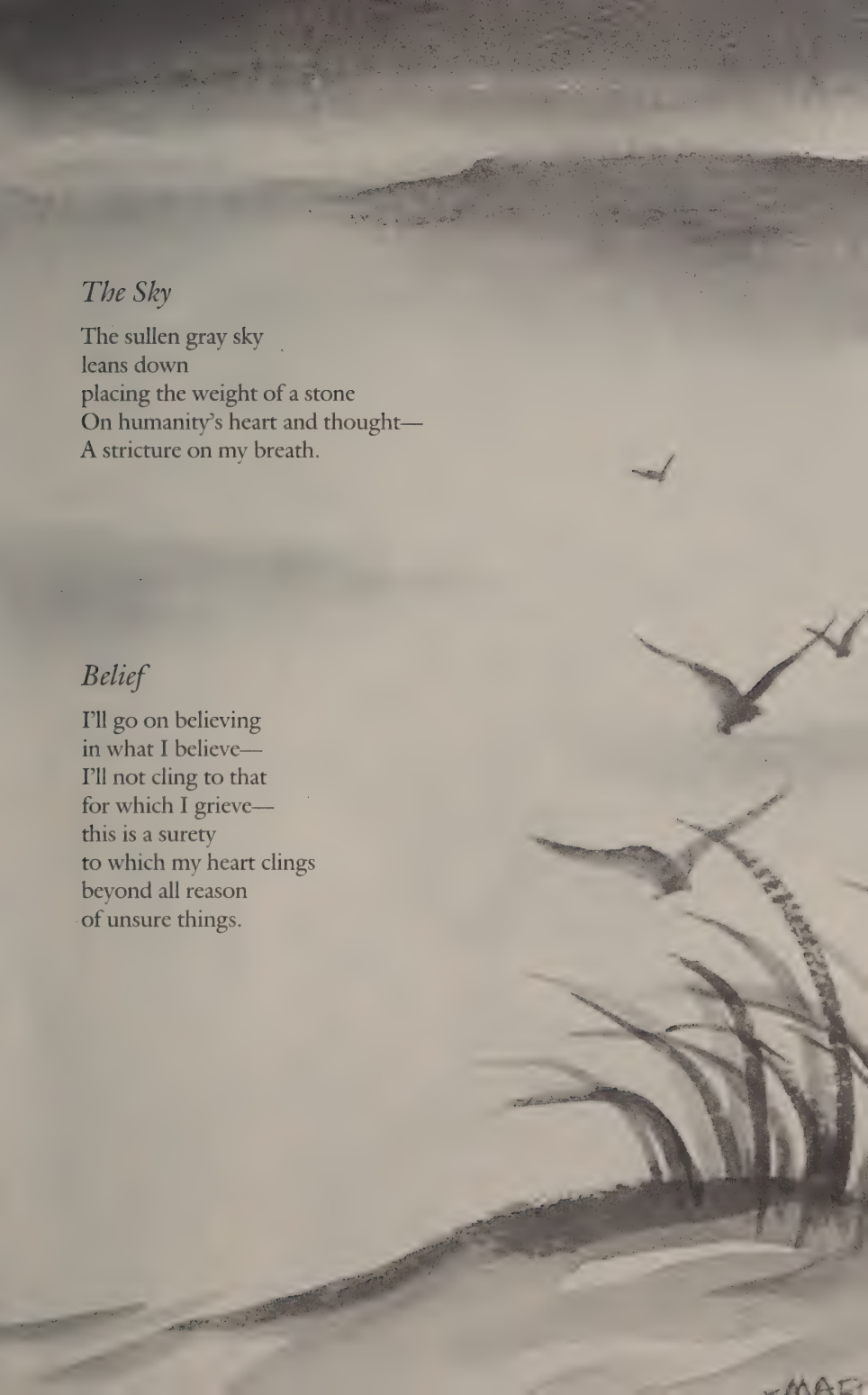
They said, "He lived a good, good life,
was proper straight
with child and wife
and never let a penny fly
for which he'd not
a reason why.
He did not swear
nor drink nor smoke—
and never hasty word
he spoke—"

But silently
they all did cry—
"What takes for him
so *long* to die—?"

Hold On

This poor pinched Soul of mine
Squeezed tight upon
It's hair-thin line
Of faith and trust,
Waits trembling there
As rib cage draws
It's meager air
And says, "Hold on—"

You will, you know,
Because, you know,
You must.

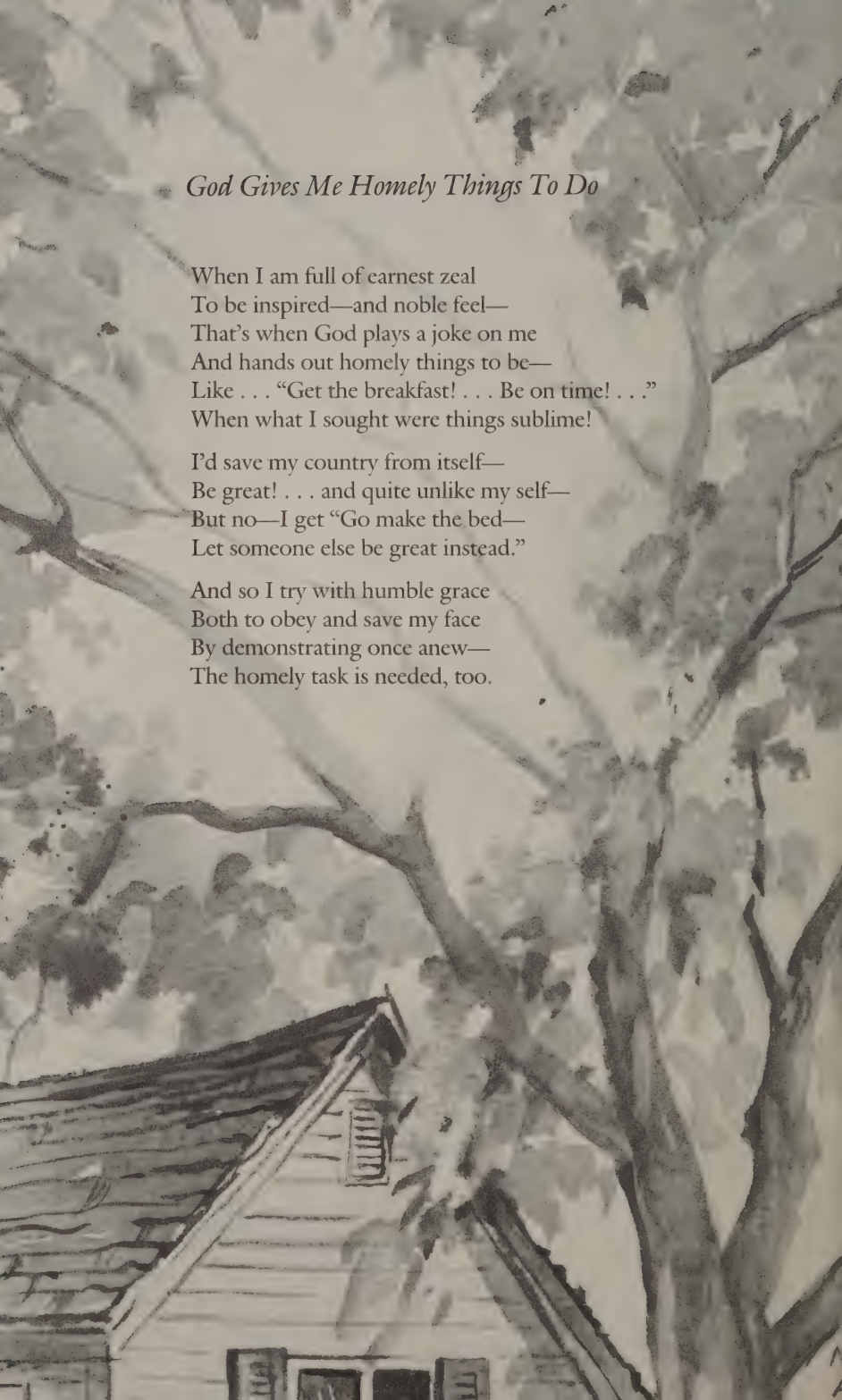


The Sky

The sullen gray sky
leans down
placing the weight of a stone
On humanity's heart and thought—
A stricture on my breath.

Belief

I'll go on believing
in what I believe—
I'll not cling to that
for which I grieve—
this is a surety
to which my heart clings
beyond all reason
of unsure things.

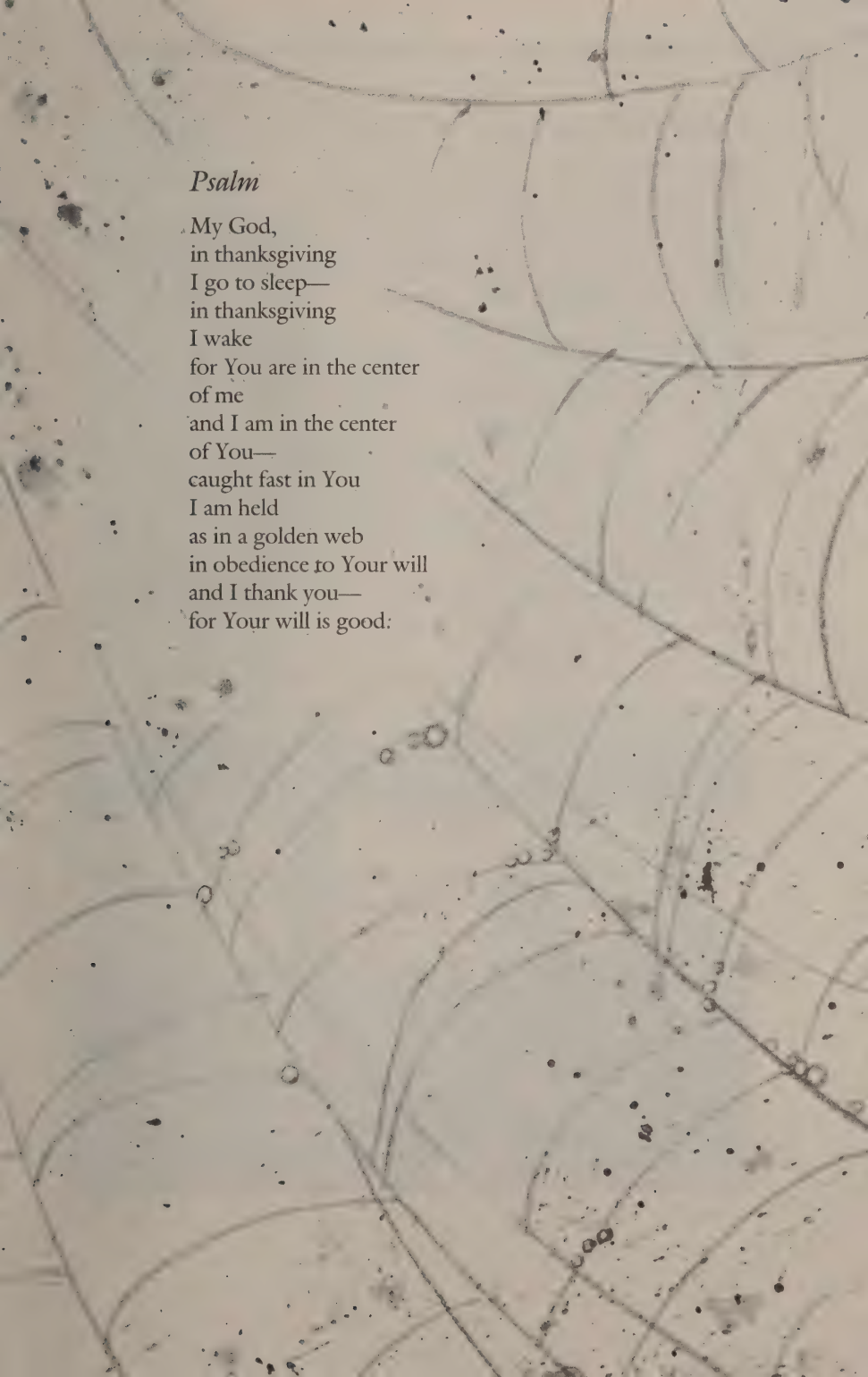


God Gives Me Homely Things To Do

When I am full of earnest zeal
To be inspired—and noble feel—
That's when God plays a joke on me
And hands out homely things to be—
Like . . . "Get the breakfast! . . . Be on time! . . ."
When what I sought were things sublime!

I'd save my country from itself—
Be great! . . . and quite unlike my self—
But no—I get "Go make the bed—
Let someone else be great instead."

And so I try with humble grace
Both to obey and save my face
By demonstrating once anew—
The homely task is needed, too.



Psalm

My God,
in thanksgiving
I go to sleep—
in thanksgiving
I wake
for You are in the center
of me
and I am in the center
of You—
caught fast in You
I am held
as in a golden web
in obedience to Your will
and I thank you—
for Your will is good.

Easter Meditations

JOHN LOFTUS, S.J.

Good Friday

> Anyone's death diminishes me, because I am involved in humanity: and therefore never send to know for whom the bell tolls, it tolls for thee.
>
> *John Donne*, Meditations, *1624 (17)*

Of all the days of Holy Week, I relate best to today. Always have! My basically morbid personality? In the days since my ordination I've been known as a "funeral priest." Like some are the marrying kind; I'm the burying kind.

Why? I suspect it has something to do with the ambiguity in our celebrations of Holy Thursday—few actually experience the warmth, comfort, community of that original dinner party. Likewise for Easter Sunday—few share the basking light of genuine and total transformation. But everyone knows today!

Everyone knows Good Friday suffering. Death haunts the human animal like nothing else; the fear of death is universal in the human condition. Remember the Pulitzer prizewinning book of a few years ago, *The Denial of Death* by Earnest Becker? It was popular because it was true.

We go to great lengths to disguise death's ugly face, but it is inescapable! Today's memory of Good Friday is, frankly, too real, too close to home. And so we move quickly to Easter, or we are embarrassed into thinking of today as "mere history." Christ doesn't really die. Maybe he never did die. He was God, after all. It is very hard to give ourselves permission to embrace this day!

I want to offer three points for meditation. 1. Let yourself set the scenario in its stark reality. 2. Notice the genuine scandal; as alive today as it was then. 3. Try to hear an invitation to yourself. Ask yourself if you, too, have a CHOICE.

1. What is today's scenario? A *wonderful* human being is convicted, executed, and dies. We must share with his friends to really get the meaning. Jesus didn't go around "loving" people; he attracted people to himself by knowing how much he was desired and loved by others—but especially by God. He attracted people to their own life and loves. He was charming, witty, bright, giving, unafraid and confident. Jesus enormously enhanced everyone's sense of themselves, the sense of their destiny, the hope for a real kingdom. Human hopes were tied in a unique

way to the life of this man. There finally was a dream in which all could really live!

And then it was over! The ending—shameful and atrocious—directly attacked all the hopes and dreams of his followers."Like any other trouble-maker, he was arrested, tried, and executed." That's the real scenario. This ought to be bad enough; but there's more!

2. Jesus CHOSE his death! It's one thing to say that he accepted it: passively . . . like a lamb led to the slaughter. But, in fact, his friends watched him move inexorably toward Jerusalem and *choose* his own end. This is the real scandal—for which Christians for centuries have either made excuses, or stared at, dumb and frightened by the sheer grossness of it. There is actually someone *who chose what we most fear*.

3. Now how about you and me? Do we, too, have a choice?

I believe there is somewhere in you and me a desire to forget the cross; we do not want a choice: we will keep the secret emptiness that no one else really knows; the awkward refusal to grow, or to grow-up; the tortuous, ancient hatred of self as never really good enough; the paralyzing fear of taking responsibility for who I am and who I will become.

Tom Dunham

Christ chooses to embrace all of these hidden places—to embrace them in God's love.

Can I thank him? Can I, with Ignatius Loyola, ask for sorrow with Christ in sorrow for me, anguish with Christ in anguish for me? Can I give myself the "indecent liberty" to actually feel with him this day?

Is all anguish, suffering, pain, death past and no longer *chosen* in love? Ask that to a young woman at the Pine Street Inn sharing her "donated" meal. Ask practically anyone in Nicaragua today. Or ask the women in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania who were told they were the wrong sex to have their feet washed.

The cross is very contemporary. Embrace it, because all that is tragic, fragile, broken, and dying must be embraced by someone. Our worst fears, our emptiness, our bitter and private embarrassment, what may be the real shallowness of our heart IS ON THAT CROSS. All we would most hide is THERE chosen and exalted in love. On the wood of the cross quite literally, hangs our salvation. From ourselves, from our world's madness.

If you hear today the death-bell toll again, you'll need not ask for whom it tolls. It tolls for thee. *Choose* to hear it in your heart.

Tom Dunham

Easter Freedom

The story is a familiar one. It is a story of passage, a story of freedom remembered from the past but lived in the present, not the stuff of idle poetry, not the beauty and power of things past—but the inviting touch of a very present mystery.

I want to ask you a question: where is your bondage? Where are your secret fears, the limitations in yourself you cannot bear? Where is the dream of your life's journey? Where is the passageway of blocked visions which only you know? Where are the memories of your journey too painful? To what and to whom are you enslaved? Wealth, reputation, your husband, your wife, your lover, friend, children, parents? Is it to a system of oppression based on creed and religion or culture? Is it to your God?

I ask you to notice the shape of your bondage. Feel for a moment the texture of your slavery; know the limit of your dream, the map of your journey. It is to *that* bondage, to that slavery, to that very personal journey and dream that the Easter story speaks. It is in your everyday life that the memory of the Lord this weekend lives. We know—all too well—that the story we tell doesn't speak with cheap solutions and easy grace. Those solutions never last long, do they? Our story speaks only of a Promise, a hope, a dream, a future. Our story speaks of deliverance and freedom; of a deliverance and freedom which we may never fully understand—but in which we are invited once again to hope and participate.

As we image our passage from slavery to freedom, from death to life—in all the very concrete and messy turns that journey takes, God leads us to know again our need for nourishment; to taste the bread and wine of life offered us, the gift of God's presence on the journey into freedom, to know our need for tenderness and care and ministry on that journey, to know our need for each other; to share the story and the dream and the journey.

For three days we recreate the symbols of life and death not only in imitation of Christ, but in the faith and hope of us all. Let us journey together with Christ. Let us discover together in his journey the meaning of our own journey. Let his freedom become our freedom. Let his entrance into the mystery of passion, death and resurrection be the way and the truth and life for us.

Deciding to Trust

JUNE VERBILLION

It was July, 1985 and I was scheduled to leave on a long-anticipated trip to the Holy Land. What should have been a tranquil, eager time of anticipation was marred by recent PLO terrorist attacks in the eastern Mediterranean; in particular the hijacking of TWA Flight 847 (our tickets too were booked on that airline) loomed large in our minds. Originally, five of us had made reservations more than a year in advance. Two had cancelled; two were still going, and I was fence-sitting, looking for a sign that would push me off the fence on one side or the other.

Complicating the decision was my mother. She was 90 and seemed disoriented and sleepier than usual. Every time I thought I should cancel, something in me seemed to say that this trip was unique, could mean a lot to me, and might be an opportunity that would not soon come again.

In this state of "balance," I went to Mass and, since it was Friday, my day to be a lector, I started to proclaim the day's Scripture reading, a selection from Genesis. When I came to 28:15, "I will keep you safe wherever you go and bring you back to this land," the words leapt from the page into my interior, and a certainty was born in me that these words were for me. The priest, a few minutes later, chose these same words for his minute homily: "In the air, on the sea, or on land—wherever we travel, God is a fellow passenger."

After this scriptural encounter, I had no hesitation in staying with the tour. As it turned out, my mother was ill and had to be hospitalized soon after I left the U.S. From Nazareth, it was impossible for me to call, and so it wasn't until Jerusalem, more than a week later, that I learned of her hospitalization. Again, all went smoothly. From my hotel room in Jerusalem, I was able to speak to her in the hospital in Oak Park, Illinois and learn that she was better and was soon to be discharged.

The trip was a delight. In spite of intense heat, airline delays, travel

June Verbillion has an Ed.D. degree and is Professor of English at Northeastern Illinois University in Chicago. She has published in various periodicals and is a Minister of Communion at St. Catherine-St. Lucy Community in Oak Park.

fatigue, I was able to relish each of the Biblical sites and extract something precious to preserve in my memory.

I am left marvelling at the ease with which the Spirit works and the pleasure inherent in such spiritual treats. In subtle but sure ways, we can be brought to appropriate, if risky, decisions. Now too, I realize that, whether it is Yahweh speaking to Jacob or to June, the response should be the same: "If God keeps me safe on this journey I am making. . . . then Yahweh shall be my God" (28:21).

Paul M. Schrock

Born Again at Easter Time

BLANCHE FABER-LE VERE

The hot August day my marriage ended in separation and finally divorce is as vivid as the day it happened. Only now there is no pain.

After my separation I became fearful, filled with anxiety, haunted by feelings of failure and guilt, and overwhelmed with responsibilities. I worked a 9 to 5 job which often required doing office work at home. Before going to work, I had to transport our three small daughters to three separate locations. The 5-year-old was in Head Start, the 3-year-old was in Day Care, and the 16-month-old went to a baby sitter.

I met a woman at the Day Care who was also separated. We became friends. I'll call her Lace. Lace invited me to a Sunday service at the church she attended on several occasions. Although I was very active in my home church I often felt empty and void after leaving the service. After much prompting, I decided to attend her church on Easter Sunday. The Easter Message was about Resurrection, Regeneration, New Birth, and Renewing.

The following Monday, I received three guests, who introduced themselves as Missionaries from the church I attended on Easter Sunday. After the introduction, Mrs. K. asked me, "How did you enjoy the Easter Message, Blanche?" "It was good," I replied. "Do you believe in God?" she asked. "Of course," was my answer. "Well Blanche," she asked, "Do you believe you are a sinner?" "Yes!" Her next question startled me: Did I know where I would go if I died the next moment? Terrified of dying I said, "No." The fear of dying gave me nightmares. She asked me if I believed God loved me. My answer to her was no. If God loved me so much, why was I being allowed to experience so much pain and anguish? She responded, "you can believe God loves you because He says so in John 3.16: "For God so loved Blanche that He gave His only begotten Son that if Blanche believe in Him she will have everlasting life." I had learned John 3.16 very early in my childhood, but it had never come alive and personal until then.

Blanche Faber-LeVere is Assistant to the Editor at F.I.P. A free-lance Christian writer, founder of Pen-Life Ministry and Life Plaques, she is working toward a degree in Practical theology at the International Bible Institute and Seminary in Pennsylvania.

She then asked if I would like to be certain that no matter where I went God would be present with me. Her words gave me a glimpse of hope and encouragement. Mrs. Jewel, her companion, asked if I would like to have that assurance. Expectantly, I said yes. She explained that through Christ's death God offers forgiveness for our sins, and through his resurrection the promise of everlasting life. The only way to establish a personal relationship with Jesus Christ is to accept His offer of forgiveness and everlasting life. She said I needed to receive Jesus Christ as my personal Savior by repeating a simple prayer of forgiveness and acceptance:

> Lord Jesus, I know I am a sinner and need your forgiveness. I believe Jesus Christ died in my place to pay the penalty for my sins and that he rose from the dead. I now invite Jesus Christ into my life as my personal Savior. Thank you for making me your child. Help me to learn to please you in every part of my life.

After I made that decision, I expected fireworks, I thought I might suddenly see a great ball of light. I thought perhaps I might begin to shout. None of this happened. As time passed I developed a desire to read the scriptures. Prayer became a vital part of my life. Whenever problems arose, I simply prayed about them. The more I prayed, the stronger my faith became. Life became new and exciting. I felt I could conquer the world. I imagined myself soaring on the wings of God. I felt freedom from within. More and more my heart became filled with praise and adoration for God. As I observed the brilliant green trees sway back and forth in the spring breeze, it became evident that God was a God of beauty and love. For the first time in my life I experienced inner peace. Burdens were lifted.

Since those early mountain-top experiences, God has held my hand whenever I have to walk through valleys. The mountain-top experiences are great, but the valley experiences taught me God's dependability, faithfulness, comfort, goodness, and acceptance of me just the way I am. The biggest revelation in my life is that God, Creator of the Universe, *loves me* without my having to prove myself worthy. It's a miracle!

To Share

REUBEN L. MUSEY

Crystal Brown of St. Paul's Episcopal Church in the historic town of Sharpsburg, Maryland, recently learned about our new feature "Prayers to Share."

Impressed by this, she contacted Trustee Reuben L. Musey, who had originated the idea. As a result, Mr. Musey journeyed to the little town—scene of the worst single days' fighting in American history—and spoke at the little church's Prayer Group on the history of the Fellowship and on the topic "Prayer—A Conversation with God."

He emphasized the following points: (1) All our prayers must be based on obedience to God, regardless of our person, whether we be sinners or saints, worthy or unworthy. (2) God has promised that our prayer will surely be answered . . . Such promises certainly ought to awaken and kindle in our hearts a desire and love for prayer. (3) In addition . . . God takes the initiative and puts into our mouths the very words we are to use.

Prayer of Charles de Foucauld

God, I abandon myself into Your hands; do with me what you will. Whatever you may do, I thank you; I am ready for all, I accept all. Let only your will be done in me, and in all your creatures—I wish no more than this, O Lord.

Into your hands I commend my soul; I offer it to you with all the love of my heart. For I love you, Lord, and so need to give myself, to surrender myself into your hands, without reserve, and with boundless confidence, for you are my God.

Submitted by Sr. Sheila Patenaude, F.M.M.

Please send your favorite prayer or one you have written (typed, double spaced) to the Editor, Fellowship In Prayer, *291 Witherspoon Street, Princeton, New Jersey 08540.*

Prayer of Cardinal Newman

Dear Jesus,
help me to spread Thy Fragrance
everywhere I go;
flood my soul with Thy Spirit
and life;
Penetrate and possess my whole
being so utterly that my life
may only be a Radiance of Thine;
shine through me and be so in me
that every soul I come in
contact with
may feel Thy presence in my soul;
let them look up,
and see no longer me
but only Jesus
Stay with me,
and then I shall begin to shine
as Thou shinest,
so to shine
as to be a light to others;
The light, O Jesus,
will be all from Thee,
none of it will be mine;
It will be Thou
shining on others through me,
Let me thus praise Thee
in the way which Thou
dost love best,
by shining on those around me;
Let me preach Thee without
preaching,
not by my words but by my example,
by the catching force,
the sympathetic influence of
what I do,
the evident fullness of the
love my heart bears to Thee.

Submitted by Sr. Sheila Patenaude, F.M.M.

Re-creation

Creator God, I need
    Your recreating.
O Saving God, I need
    Release from fear.
Day after Day I need
    Your love sustaining;
Remove my blinders so I'll
    know you're here.
Creator God, I need
    Your recreating
In my mind and heart, and
    In my muscles, too;
Help me to bear the pain
    That's so demanding
How prayers of others do
    Help to renew!
O God of love, I slowly
    Am discovering
When doubts dance round, you
    Reach your hand to me
Through friends of faith and
    Varied ways of giving—
Fingers of tender love
    Chase fear from me.

By Carolyn Whitmore Shilling

My Prayer

May all beings be happy,
May all beings know joy,
May all beings know peace of mind and body,
May all beings know love and compassion
may all beings be blessed
And attain to their supreme goal.

Submitted by Jim Pym, Surrey, England

From Easter to Eternity

DORIS APPLETON RALPH

Adele and I had been friends for just three years when she died. We met when I took my 5-year-old son to his first day in school. I looked on with the mixed emotions of mothers who watch children drawn away into that first taste of independence. Jeff slipped his hand into Adele Gilbey's hand and disappeared without a backward glance into that new and wonderful place—kindergarten.

Jeff seemed to sense something special about this Christian day-school teacher that was not apparent to me immediately. I was pleased to discover in the months to come that Adele's friendship meant more to me than the special fact that she was my child's first teacher.

Adele and I had mutual interests and compatible personalities. Gradually, we developed a rare relationship without conscious effort by either of us to cultivate or sustain it. Sometimes we went for long periods without seeing each other face-to-face, but we communicated regularly by exchanging notes. Jeff might deliver a folded slip of paper inviting one of us to accompany the other to a meeting or to go shopping. Often we simply shared news of family or items each knew would appeal to the other's compatible—and slightly peculiar—sense of humor.

We shuffled dozens of these notes back and forth over the next few years. While this might seem a flimsy way to preserve a relationship, Adele and I found notes an efficient medium until that hoped-for-day when we would live more leisurely lives and actually could get together more often.

One day late in April Jeff bounded toward the car where I waited to pick him up. A familiar white rectangle flapped in his hand. But this time the note was not from Adele. Another teacher wanted to talk to me. She asked if I knew that my friend had gone into the hospital over Easter vacation. I sat down across the desk and listened to news that turned my world gray. "No, God," I begged as I turned to the car, "not cancer . . . not Adele . . ."

As I started the car, Jeff flopped forward from the back and asked what was the matter. "Mrs. Gilbey is," I said, "very sick."

Even I was surprised by the note of panic in my voice. "Don't worry, Mom," Jeff reassured. "We'll pray for her. She'll get well." It seemed for

Tom Dunham

a while that she did. She left the hospital in less than two weeks. Radical surgery had been required, but the outlook was hopeful. I was with her regularly that summer and in the fall she returned to the classroom, feeling, as she put it, "better and more rested than in years."

The notes carried by our willing messenger resumed, but the hard reality of Adele's illness brought a change in focus. We began more and more to make affirmations of faith to each other.

One day in the middle of January I was recovering from a virus, so a neighbor picked up Jeff from school. The next morning, as I was preparing to wash his clothes, I found a crumpled note in the pocket of Jeff's jeans. "Adele is back in the hospital," it read. "Don't know the details but it is related to the surgery last May."

I sank to the steps of the laundry room and shivered. Bitterly, I asked how a God who is called love could permit such a remarkable Christian, such a remarkable human being, to die in the most productive years of her life.

Three weeks later I finally worked up enough courage to view the ravages of the terrible disease. I stepped into Adele's hospital room, completely unprepared for what I saw there. Little of my friend remained recognizable except her bright smile and the loving sincerity always present in her voice.

"You know all those Bible passages we've committed to memory over the years?" She asked. "I lie here not able to hold a Bible, alone as I have never been before, and all those Gospel words start filtering through my mind. God knows we need such assurance at times like this when our dreams are shattered and our bodies destroyed.

"I am absolutely certain God is speaking to me. I can hear God call my name. Suddenly, I'm not afraid anymore, or filled with regrets . . . except for the people I love, who love me, and might not understand how much God loves me too."

As I prepared to leave, I became aware that Adele had read something in my face that told her I was one of those people she worried about. "Write me," she said, "remind me of all God's promises. You'll be here with me when I get your notes." I told her I would be praying for a miracle, no matter what. "Good," she smiled, "that's what I want you to do." But as I approached the door, she added, "Let's both of us remember that miracles come on God's terms, not ours."

On a bleak afternoon six weeks later I was surprised to find an envelope in the mail with the return address of Adele's hospital. I had been

Paul M. Schrock

carrying on a one-sided correspondence since she was too weak to write. Thinking that perhaps she was better, I eagerly tore open the envelope. The note was from Adele's daughter. "Mother asks you to pray for her release. She is anxious to go home to God."

Just that morning I had read in the book of Genesis the parting words between Jacob and his father-in-law Laban: "The Lord watch between you and me when we are absent one from the other." I thought of that verse as I turned over the note and replied, "You know I will do as you ask. I love you, Adele. May the Lord keep watch between you and me until we meet again."

Three weeks later, on Easter Eve, Adele died. On Easter Monday she was buried with a private graveside service. Friends and relatives attended a memorial service the following evening in her parish church. We had come together to celebrate, as she put it, her life, death and resurrection.

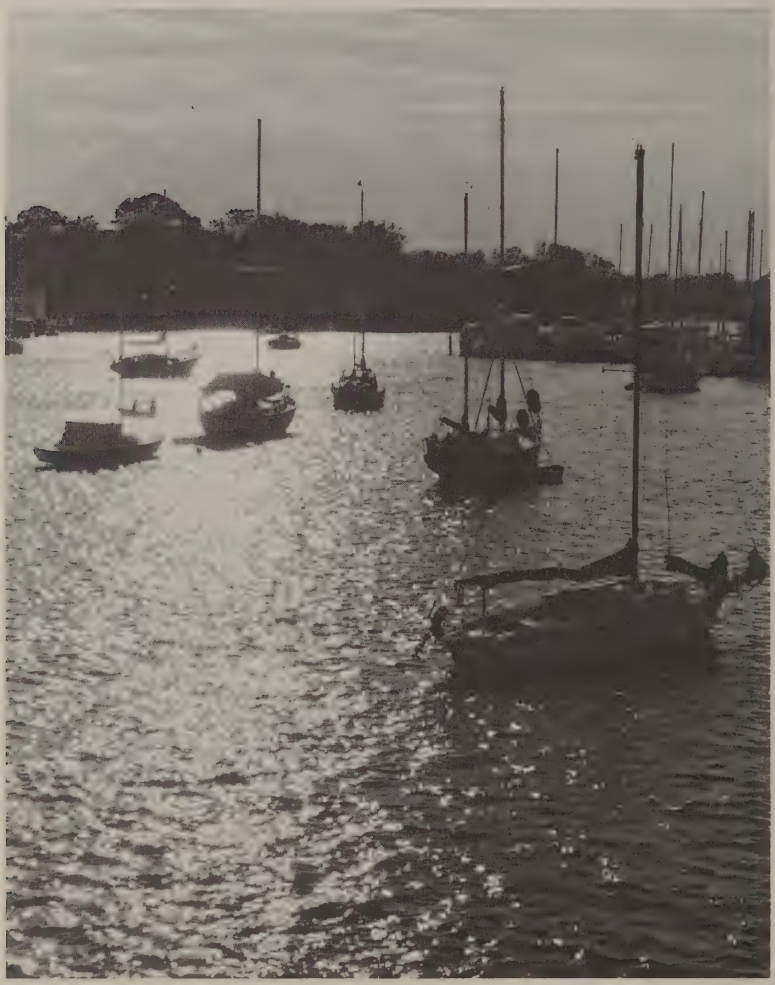
In June when the roses were blooming on our backyard fence, I said to Jeff, "Come on. Let's find Mrs. Gilbey's grave at the cemetery to put some of these roses there." At the office I learned that Adele was buried beside her maternal grandparents whose graves were marked by a large monument. When we finally found the proper section to the cemetery, Jeff and I began to look for a monument with their surname. We soon stood at Adele's grave, and as I placed the roses at her headstone, I saw an inscription on the adjoining monument, half hidden in geraniums: ". . . Til we meet again in heaven."

Years have passed since that day at my friend's grave, but the personal assurance extended to me by that message, etched to me in marble 30 years before Adele's death, lives on in my words, I believe, the Lord confirmed my faith in the resurrection of the saints and of my reunion with my friend in the life to come. Christians sometimes set sights on miracles of deliverance on a level with the parting of the Red Sea or the raising of Jaris' daughter. But the greatest miracle we can know in this life is that when we leave it we still believe in a gracious God who intends good and works good in all things for us.

My son was right when in his innocence he exclaimed that because we prayed Adele would get well. She did. There is no simple answer to the age-old question, "Why do terrible things happen to good, believing people?" Only the Creator knows why creation passes from one existence to another at a particular time and under mysterious conditions. We only know that there is a divine purpose.

This was confirmed when I saw how Adele's terrible suffering could not overcome a faith so strong that she was reconciled without bitterness

or defeat to the fate of all mortals. We who shared the process of death with her witnessed the greatest of all miracles, a faith that did not flinch in any circumstance of life. In this sense we saw her healed, and each of us, although deeply hurt was able to face life again with joy and hope. Her prayers for us also were answered.



Cliff Moore

The Gardener

KARL KOPP

It begins in darkness
seemingly

soft ardent light
of April

a seed in the ground
or in the womb

and seeing is then
our undoing She

rose before daybreak
mistaking angels

until perfected by her tears
she knew

beyond all sense
compelling

She could not cradle
nor resist

the light that touched her
whose Mary she was

and seeing is then
her undoing

bright scattered fare
of love.

Before undertaking studies for the ministry, Karl Kopp made his living as a free-lance writer and editor. He is minister of First Divine Science Church in Denver, CO.

LISA BOSCANE

Prayer

Give to your servant faithful tenderness in times of absence and
long-drawn out uncertainty,
allow her to walk along unfamiliar paths so that
new lanes will be opened in her heart,
and she will become a land of benedictions;
give to your servant the humble indulgence and patience of
the earth plowed for a long time before the promise of fruit,
for our fathers have told us the marvels that you performed
in olden days,
for the most pure chant of Woman repeats from age to age Your
Mercy for Israel the people of your sons.

"Chant Litantique"

You penetrate my heart of darkness with your light.
you are bounding river,
you are vast and tender sea
you are fountainhead,
you are my limpid water with roots buried
in the darkness of tenderness, you are birth within me,
you are darkness and tenderness,
you are ardent fountainhead,
you are liquid flame,
you are original birth,
you are eternal spurt,
you penetrate me with darkness and with light.

Translated by Mary McCarthy, R.S.M., from the French of Lisa Boscane, with the permission of Editions Saint-Germain-des-Près.

An Antidote to Negative States of Mind

YVONNE RAND

Please try the practice of the half-smile. Do it now. For the space of three breaths. It has nothing to do with feeling like smiling. Just lift the corners of your mouth slightly for the space of three full breaths, not a full smile or grin, and let your attention be with your breath, particularly on the exhalation.

This is a practice you can do when you wake up in the morning. If you already do some daily meditation practice, you can do the half-smile when you begin your meditation. When I began the half-smile I did it whenever I found myself waiting, when I came to a stop sign or stop light, when I was on hold on the phone, when I was waiting for an appointment at the doctor's or the dentist's, or when I was waiting for someone coming to see me.

If I had a signal to remind me of the half-smile when I first woke up in the morning, then I could readily remember to do it. If I did not have a signal, I usually did not remember. I would think of it around noon or three days later. So I took a picture of Suzuki-roshi laughing and put the picture by the side of the bed. Now, when I wake in the morning, it is usually the first thing I see. I promised myself that whenever I see the picture I will stop and do the half-smile for three breaths. This has been an easy way for me to begin doing the half-smile when I wake up and before I go to sleep.

It also occurred to me to do the practice when I noticed some feeling of anger or anxiety or some tension arising, and it worked. In fact, the half-smile is traditionally used as an antidote to negative states of mind.

Reprinted from Windbell, *the publication of the San Francisco Zen Center, with permission.*

Hallelujah!

ELIZABETH ANNE SOCOLOW

Glory be to God for years
of watching clouds,
the way they gather,
fold in curves and yield their tears as we do
after such long burning
by the great, hidden heat.

For the years of being hidden
like that heat, while the curves of war
and jagged bolts of lightning
tore the blue pages of our memories
with words of victory and defeat of murder
slaughter, conquest, men marching and keeping us
with hands ignorant of the shape of letters.
minds unable to store such knowledge of being lost to time.

This hearth of us could seek vengeance for our lost songs.
Kindle the house after so long,
make tinder of clapboard.
If we did not come together, all the shoulders of us
would flinch separately against the absence of recognition
and the light
in the eyes go dull as the dead eyes of an animal
on the side of the road.

There, where we have been cast alive in text,
left out and hidden except for the traces we left, our blood
a current moving through generations,
our sons and some few daughters known,
our voices lost in the clouds, risen and not recorded
by the scribes.
We have learned the lessons of the margin.

Given power in the vacant homes, men at war and work,
what children have we failed to answer what tears
failed to shed, turning them to sudden anger and defense?

After centuries of this, it is so natural to be vindictive.
Our children left alone with us have known
the flat voice of despair, the flat hand of impatience.
Hope and laughter are your blessing, God
and the great balm of joining voices like this.
Survival in obscurity, a fossil come alive on a desert
after rain, we raised ourselves with your help to this light.

God shaper of time and the brilliant changes of weather
the comfort of sky and embrace you have given us now
the word and year and hand to toll the lit face of warmth
on the far side of the veil to tell the warmth instead of war
the long swallows after great thirst the cataracts of milk
and milky eyes and the sore cracked mouths
feet and nipples we have tended. To bring others through
disaster when we were faint with loss to find balm
after bombings unguent after anguish, paint after pain.

Here we take up our instruments of song and line and marble
color the worlds we have known
of tenderness and scolding, schedule and rest
of bringing our daughters as well as our sons to believe
their work is wanted, their skills needed, their talent revered.
Now at last, God, we can see our seed is compact
of us both, man and woman together form the glove of creation.
That container of wisdom and memory and season marks
holidays with feasts and gifts and singing.

At such moments, we summon our sons and our daughters,
we birth the future itself from the cold grave of naming and
maiming, cutting, and lifting and racing chants
that buried women alive like seed behind curtains
and balconies out of sight. From this perspective, God, we have
been blessed to know the joy of return the pleasure of first
entering, the waiting that built a vision of alcove and altar and
opening, water and bread and wine palm branch and spice box
journeying and procession to the code and font
like the spill of love to the womb. We will not leave the flesh:
it is the home of everything.

Even as we grieve for those taken too soon to know.
we who can give birth cherish life from a place of desire and
disuse, a torment of not belonging and despite.
Even now as a plague the lives of those who love, we offer
our prayers to you, God, for their preservation.

Glory be to you for keeping us out so long and no longer.
Our sight turns to shining when at last we come in
and keep and speak the words
for what has been and is.

Word has just reached us of the loss of a longtime friend and Contributing Editor of *Fellowship In Prayer*, Miss Mildred Seydell. Born Mildred Rutherford Woolley in Atlanta 98 years ago, Miss Seydell was a well-known journalist, author, and feminist. She once remarked that she would much rather "set the stage for adventure than the table for dinner."

After attending the Washington Seminary in Atlanta and the Lucy Cobb Institute in Georgia, Miss Seydell travelled to Paris, where she studied at the Sorbonne and met her future husband, Paul Seydell. Returning to America, she launched her career as a columnist for the West Virginia Gazette. When she later became a feature writer for the Georgian, her work came to the attention of William Randolph Hearst, which led to her selection to cover the Scopes trial of 1925. More than 400 newspapers ran her character analyses of trial participants.

The following year, she toured Europe as a Hearst "Crime Commission" member studying rehabilitation programs. During this assignment, she obtained an interview with Benito Mussolini which was included in her syndicated "Talks With Celebrities," printed in 27 Hearst newspapers. In 1939, she published a book of inspirational essays, *Chins Up*.

Fellowship In Prayer Co-founder, Miss Kathryn G. Brown, who shared a birthday with Miss Seydell (March 21), recalls a happy visit with the journalist in her Atlanta home and the honor of sitting in her "celebrity chair." Miss Brown has recently written to the Seydell family of her great gratitude for the full and long life our friend lived, wishing to all who had the privilege of knowing her comfort and solace in the sure knowledge that her many accomplishments left a significant imprint in the world.

The following excerpt, "Prayers: For Each His Own," by Mildred Seydell appeared in *We Believe In Prayer*, by Lawrence M. Brings.

> Several years ago there was a popular song called "To Each His Own." This title expresses my idea concerning prayer. Prayers that suit other people are sometimes distasteful to me. For instance, there are prayers that bargain—saying to God "If you do this, I'll do that" or prayers that instruct God—telling Him what He should, or should not do.
>
> A prayer that brings one in the closest communion with God, nearest the source of Divine Love, is the prayer best suited for the one who prays. Such a prayer for me is short, silent and simple. Always it begins: *Thy Will Be Done*. Knowing that when I accept to be in harmony with *All Goodness* I am making my life count. I am inspired and strengthened.

I no longer depend upon my own intelligence, but through prayer I connect with the one universal, all intelligent mind, God.

The prayer I make is short, but incessant, from waking hours to sleeping ones, beginning all activities with a prayer followed by deep meditation on what I want to accomplish. I never pray for *things* believing that God knows my needs better than I, and that He will graciously supply them. And so receive instructions, which come to me through inspiration when I am truly humble and ready to obey, having attained this estate through silent prayers of faith.

I have found that when one prays to be able to do God's will rather than to have one's own personal desires satisfied prayer is answered gloriously! And though perhaps denied the things one has ardently wished for, one is given instead a peace and joy beyond the imagination of any selfish mind.

* * * * *

Recently, Miss Kathryn G. Brown, Co-founder of Fellowship In Prayer, has been receiving medical treatment on her eyes which restricts her ability to read and write. We know she would appreciate your prayers for a full recovery of these abilities, in which she has long engaged on behalf of others and "for a world united in prayer."

The staff is now at work in the Princeton home purchased last fall as a permanent headquarters for Fellowship In Prayer. In the accompanying photograph you see at the center of the house the sun room where we will be meeting daily for prayer. Here we will pray for you, for your happiness and health and special needs.

Trustee James T.C. Liu wrote recently: "I feel that after reorganizing efforts, our Fellowship now has a new lease on life, a new infusion of spiritual energy. What we still have to strive for is increasing participation of members in our publication and all activities." The Editor joins with Professor Liu in inviting you to join us in our work by sending stories of your spiritual experiences, testimonials, articles, and prayers.

Trustee Reuben L. Musey was the principal speaker recently at the Prayer Session Bible Study Class at St. Paul's Episcopal Church, Sharpsburg, MD. He presented a history of the Fellowship and guidelines on "How to Pray." Also, he was awarded a Certificate of Merit from the Waynesboro, PA Historical Society in appreciation of his efforts to preserve historic landmarks in the area.

Kim Hollingsworth, Executive Secretary of F.I.P., is currently directing the Kathryn G. Brown Awards Program for college students at Rutgers, Haverford, Bryn Mawr, Princeton, and Swarthmore.

On January 16 and 17, Fellowship In Prayer sponsored a community-building workshop designed by M. Scott Peck and led by men and women trained by him. The workshop was organized by Jane Huggins, whose fine article on dying, "Dying: the Final Step in Spiritual Development," appeared in the February issue of *F.I.P.* Participants said they were helped to move through the closed stance the ego takes with strangers to the open, receptive self. By the end of the weekend there was a genuine sense of unity in the Spirit.

We deeply regret announcing the resignation of a beloved Trustee, Emily Councilman. F.I.P. President Paul Walsh spoke for all of us when he wrote the following letter to Emily:

Dear Emily,

I was very much saddened to receive your warm loving letter asking to be released as a trustee of Fellowship In Prayer. We will, of course—al-

though with great regret—accede to your wishes. Although I was not privileged to be much with you in person, I have long thought of you as representing the best of what Fellowship In Prayer stands for. Your example, and your very Being, have served—and will continue to serve—as a wise and compassionate guide to the path our efforts should take. We shall hold you in our hearts and minds as we carry on the work of Fellowship In Prayer, with deep gratitude for all that you have contributed, over the many years, and with the certain knowledge of your love and blessing.

FELLOWSHIP IN PRAYER, INC.

291 Witherspoon Street
Princeton, New Jersey 08542

(609) 924-6863

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Since 1949 the purpose of Fellowship in Prayer is to promote the practice of prayer among all religious faiths whose fundamental belief is in God regardless of race, creed, or color, and whose tenets include the universal attributes of truth, honesty, justice, and mercy, that thereby there may arise a closer relation to Almighty God and a deeper spirit of fellowship among mankind.

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We welcome articles on prayer, meditation, spiritual experience, religious faith or practices, and similar topics. Preference is given to experiential manuscripts. Manuscripts should not exceed 1200 words, should be typed, double spaced, and sent to The Editor, Fellowship In Prayer, 291 Witherspoon Street, Princeton, NJ 08542. Please include a biography of no more than five lines.

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